toilets for a living.

Eugenia hadn't come here to unplug toilets, although she was full of criticism of the decadent West. She spent a lot of time sipping tea watching coverage of the Iraq War on CNN. She was convinced that the Americans had finally gone too far. I'm sure she considered me decadent too. She was curious about my sexuality. She liked to contrast male and female anatomy. The male had to perform while the female could be passive. The female could also fake it. That made her superior. She told one of the other workers that back home they used to stone homosexuals. That is how they dealt with deviant orientations.

She asked me if I had children. I said no. She said it used to be every man's duty to his family to procreate. Otherwise everything stopped with him. I wondered if she thought we were expendable now that we weren't doing our duty. I thought of telling her that there were other kinds of continuity besides children. I wasn't even sure that children were one. It depended on the child. I didn't think I owed anything to my family. So far as I was concerned everything could stop. The world appeared to be stopping anyway, or maybe it was time for us to get off.

I didn't like Eugenia very much. The house already sheltered twenty egotists whom we were paid to serve. Nevertheless she sometimes behaved as if it revolved around herself. She would sit in the office and peruse the confidential client files.